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ABSTRACT

For the past 13 years, the Verde Valley Campus of Yavapai College, in Arizona, has used the same system to evaluate part-time faculty in an effort to both maintain quality control and provide feedback to part-time faculty and address their concerns. The system utilizes two instruments to gather evaluative data. The first is used to determine student evaluations of instruction, while the second is used by administrator for in-class evaluations and teachers' self-evaluations in response to administrator findings. Evaluations are performed during a semester and not at the end to give faculty a chance to implement any improvements. While the time and date of the evaluations are unannounced, faculty are given the option to schedule evaluations and can always refuse an evaluation at any given class time. The entire process, from in-class reviews to student evaluations to teacher response, takes place within 1 week to 10 days. The system is unique in that it gives students a voice in teacher evaluation and in that aspects of the student instrument parallel the in-class observation instrument. In addition, the evaluation process promotes organizational clarity, the analysis and synthesis of teaching theory into practice, effective communication with classes and individual students, and enthusiasm. (TGI)

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Part-Time Faculty Evaluation: A Campus Case Study

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PART-TIME FACULTY EVALUATION:
A campus case study

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Abstract
During each of the past 13 years, the Verde Valley Campus of Yavapai College in Arizona has used the same system of part-time faculty evaluation. The system includes a standard student evaluation, an administration in-class evaluation and self-analysis evaluation. The presenter,, who devised the system, will discuss its evolution and his perceptions of its impact on instruction.

Introduction
Most community colleges are or will be facing three major issues in the near future, Outcomes Assessment, Information, and Total Quality "Something". With these new challenges looming on the horizon, it is worth reflecting on the things done well that shaped our current paradigms before one proceeds and loses processes and people. This summary is part of that reflection.

Site
Yavapai College, Verde Valley Campus is a branch campus of Yavapai College. In addition, there is a campus in Prescott, Arizona and an extension site in Chino Valley. Numerous other locations within the county serve as temporary extension class sites. The district office in Prescott, is in conjunction with the campus. The Verde Valley Campus is located in a desert-climate valley about 90 miles north of Phoenix and 60 miles south of Flagstaff. The campus serves a diverse population of approximately 40,000 people. The largest population centers are Sedona and Cottonwood. Each of these communities has a population of approximately 12,000. The remaining population is located in numerous small communities throughout the valley. Many of the most scenic areas of Arizona are found within the Verde Valley including the city of Sedona and the surrounding red rock area. The Verde River, the only river in Arizona to have its origin in Arizona, flows through the valley. The Verde Valley Campus is the only higher educational institution located in the area and serves the adult population of the nearly 40,000 valley residents. The two local high schools have no adult education programs. Some local agencies, primarily libraries and citizen volunteer groups, provide literacy and English as a Second Language (ESL) services. There are numerous profit-seeking individuals who deliver non-credit continuing education to all ages from children through retirement. There are a few non-profit agencies providing culturally related educational opportunities in arts, music and theater. The valley is noted for its scenic beauty which attracts many people wishing to retire in a rural culturally-rich area.

Yavapai College has served the Verde Valley since the founding of the college in the latter part of the 1960's. The first buildings were constructed on the 120 acre site in 1976. It wasn't until 1985 that significant additional construction took place. Prior to 1985, the college used many off-campus sites for instruction and for the location of its offices. As Arizona focuses its responsibility on the delivery of education directly to its clients, the college has used numerous leases sites for classes. This has included both elementary and secondary schools as well as other suitable places throughout the valley. Many public service classes were and are still offered in fire stations and emergency medical facilities. The current student population is about 1500 headcount with about 200 of the students attending on a full-time basis. This number translates into about 500+ full-time equivalent students (FTSE). The mean age of the student body is between 38 and 40 years of age. Most students take only one or two courses and all students are commuters. The academic schedule contains approximately 210 to 230 credit bearing classes. The campus does not offer many non-credit courses. The most common degree emphasis is liberal arts, with office administration and computer science as secondary study areas. The campus graduates about 40 students each year in degree and certificate programs.

The college campus is staffed by 14 full-time faculty and 100 to 110 part-time faculty. There is one full-time instructional administrator and one student services administrator supervised by a dean of instruction and student services. There are twenty other full-time support and professional staff and many part-time.

History and Development

Beginning as an extension program with a focus on the retired population of the Valley, the Verde Valley Campus offered about 50 percent of its program in general interest courses in the early 1980's. By the middle of the 1980s the campus offerings showed a decline in general interest courses and an increase in the application of computer science and business classes. In the late 1980s to the current year, the campus function is general education, liberal arts, business and computer sciences and general interest courses. Whereas general interest courses comprised almost 50 percent of the enrollment in 1980, these same types of offerings constitute less that 18% of the offerings currently. During that same period, of twelve to thirteen years, the full-time equivalent student (FTSE) increased from approximately 80 to over 500.

Involvement

In 1979, the writer joined the staff of Yavapai College as an extension program director and in July of 1981, transferred to the Verde Valley Campus as the instructional administrator. While an extension director the writer obtained the form "Instructional Evaluation by Students" and used the evaluation to determine the nature of problems in specific classes. The Verde Valley Campus had already been promoting the same concept and was, in fact, using the same instruments of evaluation. The instruments were:

1. Instructional Evaluation by Students for student input;
2. Instructional Evaluation for administrator in-class evaluation and for faculty self-evaluation response.

Although the instruments were not unique, the philosophy of the process used by both administrators was. Why would one want to evaluate part-time faculty?

Some considerations for evaluation of part-time faculty include:

1. Customers demand quality control and this process proves that you are also interested in quality control.
2. Institutional policies demand it and one wants to be in alignment with policy.
3. Part-time faculty have concerns, want to improve, and by providing feedback they will be better.
4. Working with part-time faculty in a positive way forms a bond between faculty and the institution.

In general, other segments of Yavapai College were, and are, currently using the evaluation to assist in personnel decisions. The instruments were being used to detect problems in instruction and to assist faculty in correcting them to improve the quality of instruction. To this date, Yavapai College, uses the Instructional Evaluation and another student instrument the Student Instructional Report, the (SIR), from Educational Testing Service (ETS) for the evaluation of full-time faculty. Until 1990 only the evaluation system for full-time instructors was contained in college policy. Although the instruments together can assist in improving instruction, there is no system established at the college to assist instructors to improve even if deficits are detected. The responsibility for assistance lies with the division chairperson or a full-time instructor.

The administrators involved in evaluation on the Verde Valley Campus used the Instructional Evaluation by Students and the Instructional Evaluation to provide immediate feedback to part-time faculty, (not then covered under the evaluation policy of the college) to improve their instruction. Both administrators had extensive backgrounds not only as faculty but as instructional administrators with observation and formal education in instructional supervision. Unlike the full-time evaluation, the philosophy of the part-time faculty evaluation system was primarily to improve the quality of instruction for each faculty member evaluated. The evaluation process was therefore:

1. A caring system
2. A personalized system
3. A helpful system
4. A confidential system

Process

The following elements were pursued:

1. Part-time faculty were informed evaluations would be completed, given information about the instrument and provided the opportunity to discuss the philosophy of the evaluation system.
2. Part-time faculty were informed that the time and date of evaluations would be unannounced. They were given the opportunity to schedule for an evaluation if they chose. Most evaluations were completed between the sixth week of classes and the end of the semester. Evaluations were generally not scheduled during review or final examination times.
3. Part-time faculty were informed that they, as faculty, had the right to refuse evaluation at any given class time, but would be subject to a scheduled evaluation at some other time.
4. Part-time faculty were assured that the total evaluation would take place within a week to ten days and would include:
    a. an in-class evaluation by an observer.
    b. an opportunity for the individual faculty member to respond to the evaluation of the observer.
    c. a student evaluation of the instruction at the same time as the observation, and
    d. a follow-up meeting with the observer to analyze the total evaluation and process.
5. Evaluations, unless not mutually agreed upon by the faculty member and the observer, would be filed in the faculty member's personnel file.

Whenever necessary and possible, the instruments were used together in an instructor's class. This resulted in conducting an in-class evaluation, having students complete an evaluation of the instructor, and having the instructor respond to the in-class evaluation with their own impressions. The information was consolidated and reviewed by the administrator and the instructor in a meeting prior to the instructor's next class. In this way, information received by the instructor and the recommendations from the conference between the instructor and the evaluator could be weighed and implemented.

It was the belief that many evaluation systems fail because they are completed at the end of the semester and only determine what has happened. Quality improvement evaluations must provide the opportunity to react with measures to improve within the same environment. They may not apply to different classes in different environments and in different semesters.

Samples and Examples

Although hundreds of part-time instructors have been evaluated, there is something new to be learned from each one of them. Sharing the information with the instructors enables the evaluator to utilize information similar to the situation in which an instructor can learn from their students. During the academic year of 1986-87 evaluations were completed on most of the instructors in the Coconino County District of the college. Although crude statistically, a summary report for 30 instructors for the fall 1986 semester was completed and the data were used to establish a base line. At that time the questionnaire was divided into two sections, 8 questions on the course and 10 questions on the instructor.

Currently

The Assistant Dean for Instruction, has submitted a proposal to allow for the evaluation of all part-time faculty during the academic year 1994-95. If funded, an additional consolidated report including more than 150 faculty members will be available. By combining data from student evaluations, on a district-wide basis, comparisons can begin to be made for a variety of conditions, subjects and individual instructional styles. There is however a move to change the evaluation instruments in some areas of the college district.

Samples of the forms and three student response results are included as appendices to this summary. The student responses are for individual faculty members who seemed to be in the high, medium and low response categories.

Outcomes and Conclusions

Both the instruments, the Instructional Evaluation by Students and the Instructional Evaluation, are unique in that they seem to focus on the aspects of instruction targeted by Gilles Nadeau in 1977 and reiterated in a stimulating speech presented by Charles Waldo entitled "Putting the Zi-factor to Work for You" presented at this national

conference in 1988. The uniqueness lies in the ability of students to respond to the questions of the instruments and the parallel aspects of the student instrument to the in-class observation instrument. The other aspect is that it addresses the questions regarding faculty related to specific paradigms. These are:

1. Organizational clarity--today the college requires that part-time faculty develop a contract with the students in the form of a syllabus. for all new faculty there is an all-day workshop on organization, the syllabus, its elements and the first day of class.
2. Analysis/synthesis--part-time faculty who work in the real world and teach about their work seldom lack perceptions about application of classroom presentations to opportunities outside the classroom. Faculty who are part-time and teach theoretical courses find difficulty with associating theory to practice.
3. Effective communication with the class. The college is entering this area as an important topic for communication. Recently, much thinking was stirred by ppresenting a short workshop on difference in communication by gender.
4. Effective communications with individuals. Adult students usually have many other persons to communicate with beyond the classroom. It is important that faculty concentrate much of their effort on the subject in individual discussion.
5. 'Enthusiasm--George Waldo (1988) called this the "Zi-factor". When a faculty member is excited about teaching and the subject, that faculty member performs in the classroom.

The instruments do not ask questions that students may not have the basis from which to respond. This includes questions related to materials and text or knowledge basis of the instructor.

Over time, it was discovered and accepted that students were very honest about the instructor and the course. There was also a close comparison between what students indicated and what the observer thought was viewed. This result parallels the findings of the writer's in the study, Community College Part-time Faculty Self-Perceptions of Teaching Performance (Williams, 1991).

Completing part-time faculty evaluation is important if:

1. the instruments collect the proper information.
2. the results of the evaluation are truly reviewed.
3. prescription for improvement is available.
4. the institution wants part-time faculty to feel important in what they do and be able to improve teaching.
5. the institution wants the clients (the students) to feel that they have some part in institutional change and control over their own learning environment.

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